one of the reasons why they have not created any positions or installed equipment in many laboratories. So, would it not be better for the Government to give some sort of encouragement so that the importance to this new subject is realised and we are able to retain these people in their positions in India itself?

SHRIMATI MARGARET ALVA: Sir, we do have department of nuclear medicine coming up in several hospitals and I would like to tell the honourable Member—of course, he knows it—that there are enough number of institutions... (*Interruptions*)...

MR. CHAIRMAN: He says that there are enough number of institutions because he himself knows the subject very well.

SHRIMATI MARGARET ALVA: We have about 200 laboratories and 90 Departments of nuclear medicines.

MR. CHAIRMAN: No. He wants more institutions to be there to absorb these people who are trained. The point is that there are not enough institutions to absorb them. So, is that the reason why they are going out of India?

SHRIMATI MARGARET ALVA: No (*Interruptions*)...

DR. RAJA RAMANNA: I believe there are not enough institutions for the size of the country to absorb them.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Have you studied it from that angle, that is, that we have not enough avenues to absorb them?

SHRIMATI MARGARET ALVA: There are 90 nuclear medicine departments and 200 laboratories in the country and we are talking of 150 or 160 trained people over all these years. So, it is not that there are not enough avenues of employment for them. There is a greater interest and two more hospitals in Rajasthan itself are going in for the department of nuclear medicine. It is not that there are no avenue. It is, perhaps, that they find more attractive avenues available abroad...

MR. CHAIRMAN: They have greens pastures there. Question No. 144.

Conference of Ministers of Food regarding PDS

*144. SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA:
SHRI N. E. BALRAM:†

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a Conference of Ministers of Food of Southern Zone was held at Hyderabad in the month of August which made some demands to the Union Government regarding the public distribution system in those States; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL SUPPLIES AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED): (a) and (b) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

Yes, Sir. A request was made to the Central Government on the following points:—

(i) That Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu should be given, firstly, rice procured in Andhra Pradesh in preference to the rice from Punjab and Northern States;

(ii) That sugar be released to States from factorie located in their respective States or from nearest factories.

(iii) That FCI be directed in farmers' interest to purchase at least 50 per cent of Paddy from regulated markets.

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†The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri N. E. Balaram.

(iv) Items like edible oil and sugar be included in the category of 'food-grains' for purposes of securing loans from R.B.I.; and

(v) Adequate allotment of Palmolein be supplied to Southern States for Public Distribution System (PDS).

The effort is to supply Andhra Pradesh rice to these States in the first instance. However, it is not possible to meet the entire requirement of these States through this rice.

Requirements of levy sugar in the case of Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka are met from factories located in the respective States. Kerala is a deficit State in sugar production. Release of sugar for the State is effected from factories located nearer to it in neighbouring States.

Food Corporation of India, in cooperation with State agencies, is responsible to procure all the Paddy offered at regulated markets in Andhra Pradesh. Purchase centres are opened by F.C.I. in such markets. The arrangements are being further strengthened in cooperation with the State Government.

The food credit is advanced by the commercial banks for helping the Procurement operations in accordance with the procurement policy laid down by the Central Government. Advances for essential commodities are covered by the Selective Credit Control of R.B.I. whose objective is one of preventing speculative holding of certain essential commodities with the help of Bank credit. Bank credit for food procurement cannot therefore be compared to financing of essential/sensitive commodities like edible oil and sugar etc.

It has not been possible to supply edible oil after March, 1991 due to lack of import.

SHRI N. E. BALARAM: Sir, I do not know whether the Government has taken note of the unusual rise in the prices, especially the prices of essential commodities like rice, edible oil, sugar, etc. The Ministers are assuring us, promising us that strong measures to contain the price rise will be taken. So far nothing has been done. That is the net result. The only relief is in strengthening the public distribution system, specially now. Sir, from the reply, I understand that only some limited questions were debated or discussed in that particular conference held in Hyderabad. First, I would like to know whether any Ministers from all these States, either from Kerala or Karnataka or Andhra Pradesh raised some of the questions like, one, whether the number of public distribution agencies or outlets can be increased or not so that you can strengthen the public distribution system. In a number of States, the distribution outlets are not sufficient in number now. Secondly, I would like to know whether you have discussed about the number of items to be distributed through the public distribution system. Thirdly, I would like to know whether you have taken any substantial steps to speed up the machinery in each State. I would like to know whether you have discussed all these things in that particular conference or only some limited questions.

SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED: Sir, this meeting was not convened by the Central Government. This was a meeting of the Civil Supplies and Food Ministers of the Southern States which was convened by the Andhra Pradesh Government. And the information that we have received—what they discussed and what they in the shape of resolution sent to us—is mentioned in the statement. About the specific question of the hon. Member that the outlets are not adequate in number, for the information of the hon. Member, I would say that later we had the Public Distribution Advisory Council meeting which was attended by the Chief Ministers and also the Civil Supplies Ministers on the 23rd and 24th of last month. There, of course, all these matters were discussed, and the decisions that were taken are being brought to the notice of the hon. House also.

SHRI N. E. BALARAM: Am I to understand to that there was no representative of the Government of India in that meeting in Hyderabad?

SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED: I can only say that I was present only at the later stage of the meeting.

SHRI N. E. BALARAM: Why? Who convened that meeting?

SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED: I tell you, it was convened by the Civil Supplies Minister of Andhra Pradesh. It was not a meeting which was convened by the Central Government or me.

SHRI N. E. BALARAM: Wonderful! It is a wonderful position! He was there, and the four Chief Ministers were there, and you did not discuss anything about how to strengthen the public distribution system, at least in the Southern India. That is what I understand. My main question is this. You are the Civil Supplies Minister. You know very well that the prices are rising every day, every week. Last week, you know that rice was selling at Rs. 6. This week it is Rs. 6.75.

MR. CHAIRMAN: He is from Andhra Pradesh itself...

SHRI N. E. BALARAM: I am not talking about Andhra Pradesh.

MR. CHAIRMAN: He is from Andhra Pradesh. He knows about rice very well.

SHRI N. E. BALARAM: Sir, I am talking about the public distribution system

The Ministers are assuring this House that they would take strong measure to contain the price rise. But they have miserably failed; the Government has miserably failed. Now, the only remedy is to strengthen the public distribution system. Otherwise it is a failure. When you called a conference to strengthen the public distribution system, what points have you discussed there? Did you tell them how to strengthen the public distribution system at least in southern India? I know that in Kerala during Onam, edible oil was not available in the market. This was a festival period. What are you doing now? What is the use of the Central Government? I ask? What is the use?

MR. CHAIRMAN: So your question is, what is the use of the Central Government? (*Interruptions*). You have put a very relevant question!

SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED: Sir, I fully agree with the hon. Member that the public distribution system is one of the effective measures to contain the prices. There is no doubt about that. Now, this is a matter which, as I submitted just now, was thoroughly discussed in the previous Advisory Council meeting on the 23rd and 24th. All those details are coming before the House. This is what I want to submit. So far as other matters are concerned, as I have mentioned, they have recommended... (*Interruptions*).

श्री सभापति : एक को सवाल पूछने दो, सवाल इधर से है । अब हरेक पूछने लगेगा तो मुश्किल हो जायेगी ।

SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED: In the public distribution system it is only the imported edible oil. As I have submitted more than once, since March of this year we have not imported a single kilograme of oil.

MR. CHAIRMAN: But they are having difficulty in getting oil.

SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED: Of course the prices have gone up, of edible oil of all the varieties, whether it is groundnut oil, soyabean oil or mustard oil. Every oil has gone up in price. That is a fact. There is no denial of that fact. Palm oil used to be imported in large quantities. Because of the foreign exchange difficulty we have not been able to import palm oil.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Did you consider the non-availability of oil during the festival season?

SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED: I can only submit to the hon. Member that for this we are trying to import some oil. I do not know how much we will be able to import. We are trying. I hope we will be able to import some oil for the festival season.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Gurudas Das Gupta.

SHRI N. E. BALARAM: One more question. Second supplementary.

MR. CHAIRMAN: He is the main person who put the question.

SHRI N. E. BALARAM: I am one of the... (*Interruptions*).

AN HON. MEMBER: It is an internal arrangement.

SHRI N. E. BALARAM: There are two types of distribution systems. In Kerala we have got a separate arrangement. They are getting rice and other materials from the Food Corporation of India which they are purchasing from regular markets. As I understand, they are not doing their job properly so that we are not getting rice purchased from the market. Can you do something in this matter. Did you take any steps in the matter?

SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED: Rice to Kerala has been regularly allocated, and they are receiving rice from the Food Corporation of India. There is not a single instance where they have failed to lift their stock. And I think on that account the hon. Member should not have any complaint against the Food Corporation of India or against...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question Hour is over.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Technology Mission on Rural Drinking Water Supply

*145. SHRI RAMSINH RATHWA:
SHRI SURESH PACHOURI:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Technology Mission on Rural Drinking Water Supply was launched in 1986;

(b) if so, what were the main obectives specific targets and the time schedule specified for the purpose;

(c) what was the organisational structure which was set up for achieving the laid down targets within the specific schedule and who were the officers who were given direct responsibility for implementing the Technology Mission;

(d) what is the actual achievement against the Missions' objectives at the end of the year 1990-91;

(e) whether the Technology Mission is still functioning; and

(f) if so, in what manner Government propose to strengthen the Technology Mission and achieve the objectives under it?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI UTTAMBHAI H. PATEL): (a) to (f) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The main objective of National Drinking Water Mission is to provide adequate Safe Drinking Water to the rural population and for this purpose to cover all residual problem villages numbering 1,37,155 as on 1-4-86, supply 40 litres per capita per day of Safe Drinking Water in all areas for human beings and in addition 30 litres per capita per day in desert areas for cattle; evolve cost effective technology to achieve these objectives within the limits of plan allocation and take measures for sustained supply of water. Apart from the specific target to cover all the residual problem villages mentioned above, the Mission has taken up implementation of 55 mini mission projects in various States and Union Territories to act as pilot projects of a co-ordinated nature and sub Missions on eradication of guineaworm, control of fluorosis, desalination of water, removal of excess iron and scientific source finding and conservation of water. The time schedule specified for the purpose of the coverage of problem villages was the end of Seventh Plan i.e. 31-3-1990.

(c) The Nodal Agency is the National Drinking Water Mission headed by the Mission Director-cum-Joint Secretary in